

The Bomb Inside

A story about the Three Angels by Ian Berry © Copyright Ian Berry Manchester December 2012

One

The phone was ringing. Louisa scooped it up, tucked it under her hair, and said, "The Angel's Office, Louisa speaking."

A voice at the other end said, "Hello, Louisa. It's Arnie Nichols. Are any of the three of them in today?"

"Oh, hi, Arnie. No, just me."

"Don't need them to start with, probably best to begin with you anyway. Pretty standard job for them, got the diary?"

Louisa pulled the large office diary that was always open on her desk towards her. "Fire away, Arnie."

That made Arnie chuckle a little bit. Usually the jobs he needed the Angels for included guns and shooting, not by the Angels, of course, but that didn't stop Louisa's little play on words being at least slightly funny.

"Right. On the twenty fifth there's a visit by some American bigwig. He's coming to visit the PM. Some Middle Eastern nasty people have sworn to get him. Are The Three Disgraces free?"

Louisa turned pages. "Yep. Seem to be. Want me to get them to ring you when they speak to me?"

"Phones are off as usual," said Arnie. "Well, on voicemail anyway."

"Ah. They mostly don't take them with them. If they want to make a call, they just tell a phone to be there with them. Don't need a phone for me - unless they want a two way conversation anyway."

Arnie laughed quietly. "Still not managed two way communication yet?"

"Nah. All I hear is Angel. She has to have a phone in one of her six hands anyway if she wants to hear what I have to say."

To any casual listener, that last bit of conversation would probably have made no sense at all, but Arnie knew that when Louisa said 'Angel' instead of 'Angels', she was referring to the way Lisa, Jody, and Holly merged themselves together to be one girl, called Angel. While in this merged state, Angel was one girl with three of everything - or in the case of hands - six of everything. Also while in this merged state, Angel was able to speak to Louisa mind to mind - but Louisa wasn't able to speak back.

"Want me to write it in the diary, Arnie?"

"Better had. The visit's all arranged and the PM's getting twitchy about it already."

"Ok. That's done. I'll get Lisa to ring you."

"Thanks. Take care, Louisa."

"And you, Arnie."

Louisa put the phone down and scribbled in the big diary industriously for a moment. Now it was just a case of waiting for one of the other three to contact her.

Two

Right at that moment, the three Angels were busily engaged in one of their favourite activities - eating. As usual, that didn't stop them chatting amongst themselves, telepathy being rather handy in that department.

"Wonder when we'll get fed up of McDonalds, then," 'said' Jody, with her mouth full of burger.

"Not yet for a while," 'said' Holly, mouth likewise fully engaged in refuelling.

"Come on, girls," 'said' Lisa, "We've barely left school. Got to be much older before the glamour of fast food fades. Besides, where else would we go?"

"Well I'd like to go to a proper posh restaurant," said Jody, "One where we have to dress up. We've not done that since the dinner party in the South of France."

"We were working," said Holly, grinning between bites.

"Hm. Had to have the poor old dress cleaned after all that fun and games with guns and rockets," 'said' Lisa. "Anyway, need to check in with Weeza. Surprised she doesn't get bored to bits, left on her own most of the time."

"Says she doesn't mind," 'said' Jody. "Besides, stroke of genius getting the lab to give us an office to work out of. At least Weeza can go and talk to people, even if it's only Victor."

"And, of course, Victor can always call me if it's desperately urgent," 'said' Holly, referring to the fact that Victor, her boyfriend, was fully able to use telepathy to 'speak' to her.

Lisa 'told' her mobile phone to be in her outstretched hand instead of wherever she'd left it. It obediently appeared as ordered. Lisa used it to ring Louisa.

"Hi, Weeza. Anything happening?"

"Got a job for you. Arnie rang. Nursemaids to some American guy visiting the PM."

"What? *Again?*" 'said' Jody, listening in to the phone conversation through the close telepathic link the three girls usually maintained.

"Not sure he should be allowed out on his own anyway," 'grinned' Holly.

"Hush, you lot. Can't concentrate with all this chatter," 'said' Lisa.

Louisa hadn't heard any of this exchange, she was still speaking to Lisa. "Arnie says can you ring him. Job's on the twenty fifth. He didn't actually say the twenty fifth of what, but I assume it's this month, in a couple or three days."

"Ok. We'll come to the office and ring him from there. Could do with a bit of fun, haven't been shot at for *ages*."

"A *slight* fib, Lisa," said Holly, as Lisa ended the call to Louisa. "There was that thing last week with the bloke with a revolver."

"And what about that other bloke with the assault rifle the other day." said Jody.

"The thing with the rifle was a mistake. He *did* apologise."

"Yeah, but I still had to deal with the bullets," grinned Holly.

"Anyway, enough mucking about. You all coming with me?"

"Why not," said Holly. "Might get a chance for a snog with Victor."

Three grinning girls made their way round the back of the McDonalds they'd been having lunch in. There they just - vanished - to reappear again immediately in their office in the lab building. Why walk, or even fly, when you can teleport yourself.

Louisa was quite used to three girls just appearing in front of her, she just twitched slightly. Didn't stop her complaining bitterly.

"I *wish* you wouldn't do that! One of these days I'll be half way through a drink of something and *everybody'll* get a bit!"

Holly and Jody grinned at her, Lisa just shook her head slightly with a little smile.

"Right," said Holly. "I'll hang about for a minute or two while you ring Arnie, Lisa, then I'm going to look for Victor and *then* I'm going home."

Lisa picked up the phone and pushed Arnie's number into it. There was a pause for two or three rings, then Arnie himself answered.

"Ah, Lisa. Hello. How are you?"

"Fine, fine, thank you for asking. You have a job for us?"

"Mm. The PM's asked if you'll be around at Number 10 on the twenty fifth. Apparently it's unlikely you'll be needed. Not like that time with the French chaps and the bomber. This is just a meeting and so on inside."

"Ok. Do we need to be incognito again?"

"I hope your licence to use long words like incognito is up to date," laughed Arnie, "But yes, your alter-egos as ministry aides please."

Arnie and Lisa discussed details for a little while, then he went away. Lisa replaced the phone.

"Doesn't sound like much of a job," said Jody.

"You know how paranoid they can get, especially if they've had an actual death-threat. Anyway, it's our job, it's what we do."

"Hey, let's take Louisa with us," said Holly. "Time she saw what we get up to in the field."

Lisa thought for a second or so. "Yes, good idea, Holly. Shouldn't be too dangerous."

"She'll need the togs," said Jody, a reference to the business suits and severe hairstyles and so on the Angels affected when being undercover at government functions.

"No problem. She can go shopping can't she? She knows what she ought to look like."

Holly went to hunt up Victor, her boyfriend, who worked at the lab. Lisa and Jody left to do whatever they had planned for the rest of the day, leaving Louisa to think about just what had been decided. Quite apart from the shopping trip, there was the prospect of maybe meeting the Prime Minister. She felt quite excited at the thought.

Three

On the morning of the twenty fifth, the four girls congregated at Louisa's house. Lisa, Jody and Holly just appeared in the kitchen one after the other, having simply teleported there. The reason for Louisa's house as a starting point having to do with the sad fact that Louisa couldn't teleport herself without help from one of the others, or from Angel herself.

Lisa inspected Louisa carefully. She was wearing a knee length grey skirt with a matching grey jacket, and a white blouse. Her hair had been pulled back into a tail that hung down her back. She looked rather older than her nineteen years - which was the idea, of course. Apparently she passed the inspection as Lisa just grinned and nodded. Louisa didn't stand out anyway, the other three looked pretty much the same.

"We ready, gang?" asked Lisa.

"Yep. "I'll take Weeza," said Jody. "Usual place?"

"Don't knock anything over this time," grinned Holly.

Jody just looked a bit sheepish. "I can't help it if people leave booby-traps for us."

"You're just naturally clumsy," grinned Holly.

"Children, children," said Lisa, obviously in Director mode, ready to take charge as she usually did in these situations. Jody and Holly subsided immediately.

Suddenly the O'Farrell kitchen was empty - aside from a slight smell of cleaning products. This was caused by the air in a cleaners cupboard on the first floor of Number 10 being full of four girls. The displaced air, along with the smells, had been moved back to the kitchen to occupy the space vacated as the girls teleported.

Lisa surveyed the little band one last time, then opened the door and the girls stepped out into the first floor corridor of Number 10.

"Need to check in with door boys, then we'll go and see Gerald in Security." She led the way to the main stairs and down them to the back of the big black door.

"Hello you three, oh, sorry, four. Who's your fourth member? Thought there were only three Angels."

"Four Angels today, Nick. This is Louisa."

Louisa suddenly realised that Lisa had included her as one of the Angels! Feeling just a bit proud - and quite a bit flustered, she held out her hand for Nick to shake.

"Pleased to meet you, Louisa. You going down to see Gerald?"

"Going to have to. Don't have any details yet," said Lisa.

"Details? What are those?" laughed Nick.

"You too, then?" grinned Jody.

"He'll tell us eventually. Hopefully *before* we need to know."

Lisa turned away and led the way to the back of the main stairs. There were more stairs going down. Lisa confidently navigated her way through the warren of passages and rooms in the basement of Number 10. Eventually they came to a door marked 'Security Office'. Lisa tapped on it and walked straight in.

There was a middle aged man sitting behind a desk. He stood up as Lisa led the way in. A hand was held out and Lisa solemnly shook it.

"Hello, girls. I expect you're wondering why we've called you all here."

"Just a bit, Gerald, yes," said Lisa. "What's going on *this* time?"

Gerald sat back down and indicated other chairs around the room. "There's a visit from the American boss of something they call Homeland Security - something like our Home Office. Turns out he's ruffled the feathers of one of the middle east extremist groups. They've responded in their usual way - by saying they're going to kill him. This will not happen on my watch - which is why you three - sorry - four are here."

He seemed to notice Louisa for the first time. "A new member? Can she ... ?" He left the question hanging.

"No, not really," replied Lisa. "This is Louisa O'Farrell. She mans our office while we're away beating people up for you and others. We thought she should come and see what we get up to."

"But if she can't - she doesn't - she might ..."

Lisa stopped him. "She's quite safe. If we can protect the PM and so on, then that will include Louisa. She'll act as our runner. She's done it before. She's good at it. Anyway, details please."

"Ah, yes. The American party will appear about eleven o'clock. There's a full sit down lunch arranged, after which the important people will push off up to the Cabinet Room for a meeting."

"Don't see any danger points in that," said Lisa. "What d'you need us for?"

"The PM had to convince the Americans their chap would be safe. Seems they've heard of the Angels."

"Ok. Whatever. Usual arrangements? Outside first? No press or other stuff this time?"

"Please. You get to eat while the meeting is on."

"Oh, goody," said Jody. "Was going to ask about that."

Lisa just grinned. "We'll have a check round and await developments."

Four grinning girls took their leave of Gerald. "We need to look around," said Holly.

"What? We just wander around? Number 10 Downing Street?" squeaked Louisa.

"Mm. They know us here, come on."

Number 10 is a bit like Doctor Who's Tardis, it's bigger on the inside than the outside would seem to indicate. Lisa led the way to a large dining room being set out for the lunch. Holly looked around with a perplexed expression on her face.

"Something isn't right. I feel a threat."

"Can you scan for weapons?" asked Lisa.

"Doing it," said Holly. She closed her eyes. "Nothing in here. No guns or explosives. Nothing more deadly than a table knife."

"You getting a PreCog or anything, Lisa?" asked Jody.

"Nothing. Not even at the back of my mind."

"Widening the scan," said Holly. "Still nothing I can't account for. There's the locker behind the door, that's all ok. Gerald has his sidearm. And right out to the gates. The cops have got their usual popguns." She opened her eyes. "Nothing."

"Jody? What d'you think? Something that doesn't *look* like a weapon?"

"Almost have to be. Holly feels threatened but can't see a reason."

"Ok. Got time yet. Casual look round is now elevated to full alert search. Cabinet Room next."

The Cabinet Room was a large room with a big table and umpteen chairs, currently being set out by a small posse of girls, all dressed more or less in the same style as the Angels.

"Hello. Which department do you four work for then?"

Lisa turned to look at the girl asking the question. She obviously decided to be blunt. "MI5."

"Oh. Sorry. Didn't realise. Don't mind us, just getting ready for later."

Lisa relented a little. She smiled. "Don't worry about us, just doing a sweep." Then she carried on to Jody and Holly only, "Feel anything?"

"No. Nothing here," 'said' Holly. "Threat is less here. Whatever's going down will be at the lunch."

The girls setting out the room didn't worry about what Holly had 'said', they didn't hear it. Telepathy was useful sometimes. The three girls had been using ordinary speech for Louisa's benefit - but they didn't *have* to.

"Check the front door and outside," 'said' Jody. "See if the threat, whatever it is, is less there."

As they descended the main stairs again, Jody had a question. "We going to tell Gerald and the door boys?"

Lisa's nose wrinkled up slightly as she thought about this. "No. We don't actually know anything yet. Sleeping dogs and all that."

By now they were behind the big shiny black door. While Lisa engaged the door guardians in conversation, Holly closed her eyes again and let her awareness reach out.

"Anything?" 'asked' Jody.

"No. Nothing that shouldn't be here. Threat feeling is less too. Dining room it is."

Jody turned to Louisa. "You ok Weeza? Sorry, we're leaving you out a bit."

"No problem. I'm getting the idea. Hey, a thought. What about the kitchen? Should we stick our noses in there? What if it's poison or something."

"Bloody hell!" said Jody, quietly. "Hadn't thought of *that*. Hang on while I tell Lisa."

The telling to Lisa was done apparently in silence, Lisa simply said, "Good thinking Weeza. Come on troops, to the kitchen."

On the way back up the stairs, Louisa asked a perhaps obvious question. "How does Lisa know where everything is?"

"She's probably stood next to somebody who knows everything about the place when she needed to know something. Now *she* knows everything as well. Just follow along," said Jody.

"Best way," grinned Holly.

"Can you spot poison, Holly?" asked Lisa.

"Probably not, but I actually don't know. I should be able to pin-point the threat, point to the poisoned whatever-it-is, just by working out where the feeling's strongest."

The kitchen staff didn't want a gang of girls invading them while they were busy - and said so. Lisa countered that by producing her security services ID. While she argued with the chef or whoever, Holly did her stuff again - with a negative result.

"No stronger in here than the dining room. Can't localise it. Seems to be everywhere. Or perhaps it's more *has been* everywhere. I think it's been moving around."

"Right," said Lisa. "Council of war. Back to our cupboard. Only place we can discuss stuff in private. I know, I know, we can just link, but that'll exclude Weeza. She's had ideas as well, look at the poison thing."

With the door to the cleaners room firmly closed, Holly began. "I think whatever it is is being carried by somebody. That's why it seems to be moving around."

"What, you mean like a gun or something?"

"No. It's not a weapon I can visualise. Might be something like a packet of poison powder or something like that. Maybe one of the waiters."

"So got to watch them like hawks," said Lisa. "Time to involve Gerald. This kind of thing would almost have to involve outside staff. Let's ask who's just here for today."

Gerald was happy to give out the required information, although he wasn't happy about what it might mean. "All the kitchen staff work directly for the PM's Office. They've all been vetted up, down and sideways. They've all been here for years and years. The waiters are another matter. Only

a couple of them are permanent, the rest are trucked in when needed. It's the same firm that supplies them each time and they get checked regularly too. Hang on while I check further."

Gerald lifted the phone and dialled. Eventually he was obviously speaking to the boss of the firm that supplied the waiter staff.

While he did this, the four girls were whispering together. "Probably the waiter staff. Need to watch them all the way through the meal," said Lisa. "Jody, you in the dining room. Holly, you go wherever the threat seems strongest. Weeza, you watch the corridor between the kitchen and the dining room. You can scream the place down if you see anything."

Louisa grinned. "Don't worry, I have extended qualifications in screaming. That will be *no* problem."

"Good. I'll stay in the kitchen. That should let us spot any skulduggery, and Jody and Holly can take care of any rough stuff."

By now Gerald was off the phone. He waited patiently for the whispered conference to finish. "All the guys they've supplied have been with them for years. Mostly not English, but that's what you have to expect here in London these days. I take it you have a plan?"

"Yeah. Basically involves keeping our eyes open, talking amongst ourselves, and pouncing on anything we don't like the look of."

"Don't suppose my chaps can help?"

"With all due respect," grinned Lisa, "Your chaps are a bit obvious. I presume you'd like to catch whoever it is at it?"

"Be nice. Brownie points from our American cousins."

"Thought as much. Leave it with us. I think we're on anyway, motors should arrive any minute. Come on girls, to the front door."

Four

There was a small army of people behind the front door. The girls simply added themselves to the number. The PM appeared. Some other Cabinet members, like the Home Secretary, accompanied him as he descended the stairs. The small army parted in the middle to let them pass. Then they all waited.

The method of warning people behind the door that their presence was required in front of it probably hadn't changed for hundreds of years. The cop on duty outside the door knocked on it!

Nick, from the door staff, pulled the door open, and the PM's party marched out - followed by the small army, which included the four Angels. There they found the gate open and a huge convoy of cars driving through.

"Scan, please, Holly," said Lisa."

"Nothing round us that wasn't there before, apart from the Americans. They have a ruddy arsenal! They could take out most of London with this lot. All accounted for, though, no threats."

Gerald had been standing next to Holly, obviously knowing how this would go. There was no need to tell him, Holly had spoken out loud for this very reason. Gerald gave a nod to the men in black suits round the cars. These chaps swung into action. Doors were opened, bigwigs extracted, hands shaken, and the whole circus swept into Number 10.

Most of the circus hung about behind the door and in the lower corridors. The Angels followed the main party up the stairs. Before the actual meal, Lisa had 'discovered', using her abilities as the Director of the Angels, that there was to be a drinks party in a room next to the dining room.

"Holly, Jody, in with the guests, and lay off the booze the pair of you. Weeza, you hang about out here. Sorry it's not very glamorous."

"Ok, Lisa. I'm on it," grinned Louisa as she settled herself into a corner to wait.

Lisa herself went and prowled round the kitchen. She was quickly joined by Holly.

"Nothing out there. Strongest in here at the moment. Whatever it is is in here."

"What if it's a person," 'said' Lisa. "If they're going to do away with the American chap with bare hands, what would you see?"

"Hm. A threat without a reason for it. You could be right. Better be prepared to use telekinesis to hold somebody immobile. Not yet I don't think. The feeling isn't getting stronger at the moment."

Drinks finished, the main party moved into the dining room. Once they were all seated, there was a flurry of activity as the first course was served.

"Threat's moving!" 'said' Holly. "It's left the kitchen."

"Weeza hasn't screamed so nothing's happened on the way from the kitchen to the dining room."

"Jody? Keep a look out. Holly'll be with you in a second or so."

"Nothing here," 'said' Jody. "The waiters are just dumping plates and leaving again. Nothing's being interfered with."

"Stick with it. *Something's* going on," 'said' Lisa with an exasperated tone.

Five

Louisa, naturally, wasn't party to the conversation between Lisa, Jody and Holly. She was all alone out in the corridor. Alone, that is, until one of the waiters came out of the dining room and stopped almost next to her. It appeared he hadn't noticed her. Louisa watched him curiously. He didn't head back to the kitchen for more supplies, he was fishing in his pants pocket. Louisa was surprised to see him sweating really quite a lot. Strange - as it was actually quite cool in the corridor.

He drew out a small plastic device which Louisa recognised almost at once as a remote control fob, the sort you lock and unlock your car with. At that point she must have moved slightly, probably to see better. The waiter turned and spotted her. Before she could even suck in a breath to scream, his arm was round her, the other hand over her mouth. He'd obviously done this before as he used one finger and a thumb to pinch her nose closed - she couldn't breathe!

Not being able to breathe meant she couldn't scream or even cry for help. Her mouth couldn't make the sound, but her mind could certainly think about it. She found herself calling for help but with no sound.

"Lisa? Can you hear Weeza?" 'asked' Jody. "I think she's in trouble."

"Angel - now!"

The three girls merged their minds together to produce one single girl, Angel. This took much less than a second and, once done, Angel could hear Louisa quite plainly.

"Help. Help me. He's got me! I can't breathe!"

"Weeza, *Weeza*. I'm coming. Let yourself go limp in his arm. Pretend you're unconscious."

The Lisa part of Angel burst out of the kitchen.

"Angel, watch out. He's got a remote control. Must be a bomb."

"Thanks, Weeza. He can't use it, I've got it held."

The Jody and Holly parts of Angel joined them in the corridor. It took Angel just a second or so to prise open the man's hand where it was clamped across Louisa's mouth. Louisa drew in a shuddering breath. "Thanks, Angel. Have you got a firm hold on the switch thing?"

"Yep. It's not going anywhere."

"In that case ..." Louisa stamped on the man's foot - hard. Then she used a spare elbow to thump him in the kidneys. He went 'oof' and released her. She stepped away from him, breathing hard but otherwise ok.

Angel 'said', "The threat is still here. It's here, with us." She was using the abilities normally used by Holly. Angel could use any of the abilities used by any of her three parts.

"But he isn't carrying *anything*, never mind a bomb." 'said' Louisa.

"Hm," said the Lisa part of Angel out loud. She continued, still out loud, "Does that switch control a bomb?"

The waiter answered so readily that Angel must have ordered him to do so, using one of Lisa's abilities. His answer was one word, "Yes."

"So where is it?" asked Angel in the same orders-giving voice.

The answer was quite a shock. "It's inside me. I swallowed it just before I came here."

The three parts of Angel didn't need to discuss what that meant or anything else, she already knew what each part was thinking. "Can't be very big. You'd have to be very close, and you'd be killed as well."

"That is not important. I was to have exploded the bomb as I leaned over to clear away his dinner plate."

"He was sweating cobs," 'said' Louisa.

"Probably terribly afraid, despite his resolve to see it though," 'said' Angel.

"What do we do?" 'asked' Louisa.

"We fish it out of him," said Angel. The Holly part of Angel disappeared into the kitchen and came back carrying a plastic bucket. "Get ready, going to be messy."

The Jody part of Angel closed her eyes to improve the concentration of that part. Her mind reached out, actually feeling for the inside of the man in front of her. There was a few seconds of silence, then the Jody part said 'Got it,' and there was a thump from the bucket. At the same time the waiter gave a *colossal* burp.

"Aha," said Angel, through Lisa, "That's the air I dumped into his stomach."

Now sweat began to stand out on the man's forehead again. "No point trying to press the button and blow us all up," said Lisa-Angel again. "My telekinesis is *much* stronger than your hand. In fact ..."

Slowly the man's hand and arm reached out to where the Lisa part was standing. His arm shook slightly with the effort of trying to stop Angel's telekinetic control of the muscles in his arm. In effect he held out the remote control button to her. She didn't take it. "You were never going to win. The only reason I didn't take the button off you at the start was so you'd be sure to tell me where the bomb was because you thought you might get a chance to set it off. I could just have done - this."

On the word 'this', the button vanished from the man's hand - and reappeared on the outstretched hand of the Holly part of Angel who was standing some distance away, near the kitchen door. The man's shoulders actually slumped as he realised he was beaten. He couldn't escape, the fun and games had drawn quite a crowd, many of them dressed in black suits with bulges under their arms.

One girl became three girls as Angel let the merge collapse to become Lisa, Jody and Holly again. Lisa turned to Gerald.

"Can your boys drag him off somewhere. We're causing a traffic jam. There's still a lunch going on."

There were not a few grins as the ex-suicide bomber was led away. Gerald himself remained behind.

"I'm just going to let the PM know what's going on. Don't disappear, his nibs will want a report later." He went into the dining room, presumably to whisper in the ear of the PM.

Lisa collared one of the men in black. "You'd better deal with this," she said, holding out the bucket containing a distinctly yucky-looking bomb. "Being inside him can't have done it much good. You'll need bomb disposal."

Slowly the corridor cleared, leaving just the Angels and a conga line of waiters going to and from the kitchen and dining room. Then there were just the waiters, the Angels having discovered chairs in the room previously used for the pre-lunch drinks. It was nice to sit down for a few minutes.

"Weeza?" said Lisa, "You *do* realise what's just happened, don't you?"

"Well, yeah. We've caught a bomber and saved the American chap."

"Not what I meant. All that's routine. It's what we do, it's why we're here. No, you do realise you were transmitting as well as receiving. You used two way telepathy."

"Stress will do that," said Holly. "That's how we found we could teleport."

"Yes, but she carried on thinking instead of speaking after she made him let go of her," said Jody.

"Hm," said Lisa. Then she 'said', "Can you hear me, Weeza?"

"What? Oh. Yes I can, Lisa. And it's just you? You haven't"

"No, Weeza. Just me, not Angel. See if you can reply."

"Hello, Lisa." Louisa 'said'. "I'm just thinking at you."

"Congratulations, Weeza," 'said' Jody. "You seem to have woken yourself up a bit."

"You heard me as well, Jody? Holly?"

Jody just grinned, but Louisa suddenly got a picture, obviously sent by Holly, of a hand with a thumb up. The thumb was about three times too big for the hand, like a cartoon. That made her laugh out loud.

"You got it then?" 'said' Holly.

"This is *brilliant*," 'said' Louisa.

"Yeah, isn't it. Saves a fortune on phone bills," 'said' Jody.

"Trust you to think of that, Jody," 'grinned' Holly.

Louisa wasn't sure how you could grin with your mind, but obviously it *was* possible. Further discussion was put on hold as Gerald appeared.

"Ah, this is where you're hiding." He dragged up a chair and sat down. "The PM is - quite pleased. The Americans are a bit happier as well. They want to drag the man off, probably to Guantanamo Bay or somewhere. The PM isn't having any of that, we're dealing with it. The Americans are less happy about that but they'll get over it. As for me, I've now got to review our external staff security arrangements."

"We're sorry, Gerald," said Lisa. "We didn't mean to give you problems."

"Oh, it's no problem, not for me at any rate. I just give orders. Done us a favour really. It's very easy to get complacent. It's shaken us up a bit, something we probably needed. But I have a question."

"Ask away," said Lisa.

"Just how on earth did you get the bomb out of the guy?"

"Ah, right. Did you hear about a certain nuclear submarine we fixed? Basically, we, or rather Jody, can manipulate things she can't actually see."

"It's a bit like doing stuff by touch, or with your eyes closed," said Jody. "Doesn't seem to matter that what you're trying to fiddle with is *inside* something. In the sub, it was inside the reactor, here it was inside the man. Same principle - just a bit messier. Only managed it because the bomb was hard, not all squishy like the rest of him."

"Once Angel'd sussed where and what shape and stuff, she just teleported it out of him and into the bucket," said Holly.

"The way this works is to exchange what's in the place it *is*, with what's in the place you want it to *be*. That was air. You can't see it, but it's still there. A chunk of air the same size and shape as the bomb was moved into his stomach," grinned Lisa. "Air in your stomach makes you burp, which is what he did."

Six

Despite having to hang around for a while, the Angels were quite happy. What did you expect - there was *food* available. Even Louisa ate more than she normally would have.

"Weeza?" 'said' Jody, using telepathy because her mouth was engaged in other activities."

"Hm?" 'said' Louisa, "Hey, this great. We can talk and eat at the same time!"

"Good isn't it? Anyway, you managed to beat up that bomber quite handily there at the end. Why didn't you do that at the start? Then a scream would have brought us all running."

"He had a trigger for the bomb. If I'd thumped him, he might have pushed the button by accident. I didn't know where the bomb was. Considering where it *actually* was, I'm glad I *didn't* do anything."

"Valid point," 'said' Lisa. "You probably wouldn't have discovered your latest talent. So not all bad then."

Gerald was obviously busy, so somebody had sent a runner in the shape of one of the girls the Angels had seen earlier. She seemed a bit awed at being in the same room with the famous Angels. She gave herself a little shake and said, "The PM says can you be at the front door in about five minutes. Our visitors are leaving."

Lisa smiled at the poor girl. "We'll be there."

"Oh. Thanks." And the girl left at some speed.

Holly sighed. "That's always the problem. The staff or whatever talk amongst themselves and our exploits get blown up out of all proportion. Nobody ever sees us as just girls."

Lisa grinned. "Come on then gang. Let's go and make sure we live up to our reputations."

There was no problem as the Americans took their leave. Gerald had appeared and accepted reassurance from Holly that all was well. The arrival was run in reverse to become a departure, and the cars swept out of the gates.

Lisa looked at Gerald. "Suppose his nibs wants to speak to us?"

"He said if it's not too much trouble."

"He's the boss. Never too much trouble. Now?"

"If you please."

Lisa led the way up the stairs. A couple of corridors later and she stopped outside a more or less standard door. She knocked. A voice from inside said, "Come in."

Lisa pushed open the door and the four girls marched in, into the office of the Prime Minister. Lisa, Jody and Holly had obviously been in here before, but Louisa couldn't help looking round her. There wasn't much time for sightseeing, the PM got up and came round the desk. He insisted on shaking hands with the girls, including Louisa, to her delight.

"Come and sit down." He led the way to a couple of settees and a coffee table at one end of the room.

"Once again it seems I need to say thank you. You did a good job."

"We thought it'd just be a case of standing around all day," grinned Lisa. "Events proved otherwise."

"I hear one of you was assaulted, which one was he stupid enough to take on?"

"Actually it was Louisa here. She doesn't come on many jobs. Just her luck today."

The PM turned and addressed Louisa. "Are you all right, my dear?"

"I'm fine sir, really. I got my own back on him eventually."

The PM raised an eyebrow at Lisa.

"Once she was sure that he couldn't detonate the bomb if she wriggled, Louisa beat him up. I suspect she could have done that from the start but she waited until Angel had made the bomb safe first."

"Well, you have our thanks again."

"Don't worry, sir. The invoice will be in the post - as soon as Louisa here types it up. And she can't do that unless we get back home." Lisa stood up. "If there's nothing else, sir?"

"At the moment, no. I'm sure we'll meet again."

Holly, Jody and Louisa struggled to their feet and shook the hand of the Prime Minister as he held it out. Then it was back to their cleaners cupboard.

"Still need me to 'port you, Weeza?" grinned Jody, "Or are you able to zip about on your own now?"

Louisa looked sheepish. "I know you're pulling my leg, but I've been trying to do stuff, you know, like you three can."

"And?"

"Nothing. I can talk to you now but that's all."

Holly put her arm round Louisa's shoulder. "Don't worry about it. That's how Victor is. Wouldn't surprise me if Angel can't use you to do stuff the same way she gets the three boys to. We'll have to try - but not today."

The four girls crowded into the small room. For a moment it was full of girls, then it was empty. All that was left was a faint smell of chicken casserole in the air from Louisa's kitchen.